

Fort Sam Houston National Historic Landmark
Telephone Exchange (Building #141, Cavalry Post)
San Antonio
Bexar County
Texas

HABS No. TX-3303-13

HABS
TEX
15-SANT,
39M-

PHOTOGRAPHS

HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Architectural and Engineering Record
National Parks Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
FORT SAM HOUSTON NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK

TELEPHONE EXCHANGE
(Building #141, Cavalry Post)

HABS No. TX-3303-13

HABS
TEX
15-SANT
31M-

Location: On the south side of Stanley Road directly behind the Cavalry Post Barracks (HABS No. TX-3303-12) San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas

Present Owner and Occupant: United States Army

Present Use: Reserve Unit Offices

Significance: Built in 1913 as a one-story structure this building originally served as a Post Telephone Exchange. A second story was added in 1917 and at that time the building was converted to office use. During the 1940s, a barber shop occupied the first floor but the building has since been returned to office use.

As part of the Cavalry Post, the building was constructed of a red brick similar to that used for the surrounding buildings and contributes to the overall cohesive appearance of the area.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of Erection: 1913; second floor added in 1917.
2. Architect: Constructing Quartermasters Office, Fort Sam Houston, Texas.
3. Original and Subsequent Owners: U.S. Army from date of construction to the present.
4. Contractor: Not known.
5. Original Plan and Construction: Built as a one-story structure in 1913, it is recorded as plan no. D-57 on the original quartermaster drawings. A "vestibule" and "telegraph office" were located at the front of the building, with the center open office space. There was a rear "battery room" with a built-in battery storage case and also a water closet. The original roof was hipped with a wide overhang. The building was constructed at a cost of \$2243.

6. Alterations and Additions: A second story was added in 1917 and the interior floor plan modified to accommodate an interior staircase in the northeast corner. The exterior of the additional story is also of red brick, and is covered with a wide, overhanging hipped roof.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural Character: This oddly proportioned, two-story structure appears top-heavy with its overhanging hipped roof. This condition is due, at least in part, to the fact that the second story is a later addition. On the other hand, the use of red brick walls and dressed limestone lintels and sills enable the structure to blend comfortably with the other adjacent structures of the Cavalry Post complex.
2. Condition of Fabric: The fabric condition is good; the tie rods at the second floor run north-south and east-west.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all Dimensions: This structure measures 18' x 28' or two bays by three bays, two stories high with a rectangular plan.
2. Foundations: The foundations consist of brick and concrete.
3. Wall Construction, Finish and Color: The walls are made of smooth red brick with narrow mortar joints and are finished with common bond in a 6-1-6 pattern on the first floor and 5-1-5 pattern on the second floor.
4. Structural System, Framing: The structural system consists of brick load-bearing wall construction. The walls are 10" thick.
5. Porches, stoops, balconies, and bulkheads: The front concrete stoop has three steps at the entry.

The original bulkhead on the west facade is now filled in with brick. (Original plan identifies this area as a 4' x 6' manhole--there was no basement. Plans do not indicate its purpose.)

6. Chimneys: There was one narrow interior chimney with a corbelled cap on the east rear wall. The original chimney was an interior chimney on the west side and was close to the front.
7. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and Doors: The front door is a narrow, five-panel, raised-panel door with an arched brick lintel.
 - b. Windows: Two-over-two sash windows with limestone lintels and sills. Most are 2'-10" x 5'-4". Two front second-floor windows are much larger. All windows are equipped with screens.
8. Roof:
 - a. Shape, Covering: The roof is hipped with a wide, beaded-board overhang. The roof is slate with metal flashing along the seams. Gutters run along outer edge.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor Plans:
 - a. First Floor: The front door leads into a small hall with a staircase on the left. A small office lies to the south at the center of the building. There are a boiler space and lavatory immediately behind.
 - b. Second Floor: One single office space (measuring 16'-4" x 26'-4") is on the second floor.
2. Stairways: A stairway runs north-south with five steps to a landing, and then turns east-west up to the second floor. A square-block newel post is at the base of the stairs, with another on the second floor. The stairway also has a molded hand rail and squared balusters.
3. Flooring: 12" brown tiles cover a 4" board flooring on the first and second floors.
4. Wall and Ceiling Finish: The walls and ceiling are made of plaster.

5. Doorways and Doors: All doors are five-panel, raised-panel doors; a small door is found off the first floor office leading to a closet space under the staircase.
6. Special Decorative Features, Trim, Cabinetwork: Plain trim is found around the doors and windows; the baseboards are trimmed throughout with quarter-round moldings. Picture molding is found on the second floor approximately 6-8" below the ceiling.
7. Mechanical equipment:
 - a. Heating: Heating is provided by gas-fired heating cabinets - hot air heat.
 - b. Lighting: There are suspended, indirect, florescent light fixtures on the first floor and three standard globe-light fixtures on the second floor.

D. Site:

1. General Setting and Orientation: This structure is located on Road S-4, East of Liscum Road and stands as part of the Cavalry Post buildings of similiar materials and scale-behind barracks building number 143.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Original Architectural Drawings:

Directorate of Facilities Engineering, Fort Sam Houston, Texas. Plan #D-57 of the Constructing Quartermaster's Office, Fort Sam Houston, Texas.

B. Bibliography:

Real Property Records, Directorate of Facilities Engineering, Fort Sam Houston, Texas.

C. Likely Sources Not Yet Investigated:

Correspondence and other miscellaneous files relating to Fort Sam Houston, San Antonio, Texas. National Archives and Records Service, Washington, D.C.

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

The detailed survey of eighteen (18) architecturally representative structures, and a group of streetscapes, at Fort Sam Houston, San Antonio, Texas, was undertaken in 1980 by the National Architectural and Engineering Record (NAER) after a comprehensive inventory of the Post was conducted. Funding for the project was made possible through the cooperative efforts of the Department of the Army, Fort Sam Houston, and the San Antonio Conservation Society.

This project was under the general supervision of Kenneth Anderson, Acting Chief of the Historic American Buildings Survey of the National Architectural and Engineering Record. Sally Tompkins of the NAER staff was project supervisor. Project Historian was Kathryn A. Burns, San Antonio, Texas. Photographic records were provided by David Kaminsky, Roswell, New Mexico.